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ABSTRACT

This bulletin details the findings of a 1995 study involving 891 school districts in all 50 states that examined key factors of inclusive education practices. Findings indicate: (1) there is no single or even general pattern of initiation of inclusive education programs in local school districts; (2) as states and school districts engage in broad educational restructuring, inclusion programs are implicated; (3) students with all disabilities, at all levels of severity, are effectively involved in inclusion programs; (4) many staffing models are used by school districts to support inclusive education with co-teaching most frequently used; (5) teacher attitudes about inclusive education range from being the initiators of inclusion programs to opposition; (6) instructional strategies and classroom practices that support inclusive education for the most part are the same ones that teachers believe are effective for students in general; (7) there is the same level of parental involvement when inclusive education programs are implemented; (8) there are academic, behavioral, and social benefits for students in inclusive environments; and (9) current state funding formulas support segregation and inhibit inclusion. Statements are provided from individual school districts to support each of the findings and recommendations for furthering inclusive education are presented. (CR)

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NATIONAL STUDY ON INCLUSION
OVERVIEW & SUMMARY REPORT

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NATIONAL STUDY ON INCLUSION: OVERVIEW & SUMMARY REPORT

The National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion (NCERI) has conducted a study to identify the key factors of inclusive education practices as identified by the school districts that are implementing inclusive education programs. The areas studied include: 1. the initiation and planning process; 2. the role of inclusive education in school and district restructuring; 3. the extent of inclusive education; 4. staffing and school organization; 5. staff attitudes; 6. instructional strategies and classroom supports; 7. parental response; 8. student outcomes and program evaluation; and 9. fiscal issues.[1] This report builds upon the 1994 NCERI national study of inclusive education.

The 1994 national study of inclusive education reported programs in 267 districts in 47 states. This report lists 891 districts in all fifty states.

As inclusive education programs have grown, increasing attention is being paid to outcomes for general and special education students. Many school districts are conducting program evaluations, often in collaboration with statewide studies and university researchers. In general, these studies report positive student outcomes (academic, behavioral, and social) for students with disabilities. For nondisabled students, the near unanimous reports from teachers, parents and the students themselves are positive in terms of social and behavioral outcomes, frequent reports of positive academic outcomes, and no reports of negative effects academically.

Key to the success of inclusive education programs are the teachers and other school personnel, special and general education. Comprehensive staff development programs and flexible time for school personnel to meet and plan together are reported as critical. When supplemental supports and staff development are provided, teachers report successful outcomes for all students and an enhanced sense of professional competence, as well as a new pattern of colleagueship with their peers.

On a national basis, school district data indicate that an increasing number of special education students are involved in general education programs. Also, students with a wider range of disabilities are involved in these programs. Nationwide, students with each of IDEA's (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) thirteen disability categories, at all levels of severity, at all grade levels, are being served effectively in inclusive settings.

For many school districts, the development of inclusive education programs has been integral with broader educational restructuring. In others, it has been a consequence of such restructuring, and in a few districts, the development of inclusive education programs has led to broader restructuring.

Key findings from the data in the 1995 study are:

- The number of school districts reporting inclusive educational programs has increased significantly since 1994;
- Outcomes for students in inclusive education programs, both general and special education, are positive;
- Teachers participating in inclusive education programs report positive professional outcomes for themselves;
- Students with a wider range of disabilities are in inclusive education programs; and
- School restructuring efforts are having an impact on inclusive education programs, and vice versa.

1. The Initiation and Process

The data indicate that there is no single or even general pattern of initiation of inclusive education programs in local school districts. Rather, programs have been initiated based on the interests of individuals or groups. Among these are the following: parents; teachers, both general and special education; administrators, both school principals and district superintendents; clinicians and related services providers; state or district reform initiatives; federally funded systems change projects; and court decisions.[2]

The initiation of inclusive education programs does not begin at any single point of entry. Programs are initiated at all grade levels: preschool and kindergarten, in the elementary grades, at middle schools, and in high schools. In most school districts, however, programs are started at the elementary level. When success is established or students transitioned, inclusive education programs are initiated at the next grade level(s). In a few instances, school districts initiate the changes at all levels at the same time as part of a larger restructuring effort and a new district philosophy. Initiation begins with students with mild and moderate disabilities, as well as with students with significant impairments. Programs begin in single classrooms, across a grade level, buildingwide, and districtwide. In a few instances intermediate units initiate the process, while in other cases they respond to member district initiatives.

The planning process in some school districts is informal; but for the most part, it is comprehensive and ongoing. Reports from school districts appear below:

- The school discussed the topic (inclusion), pro and con, and wrote a Site-Based Restructuring Plan to implement inclusion for the special education population ... The plan called for inclusion of special education students full time into the regular education classroom. An aide would be hired for every ten special education students and the special education teacher would develop a schedule for her and the aide to assist teachers and students. To assist this process, collaborative planning was developed on a weekly basis and a substitute hired to allow the regular education teacher time to plan with the special education teacher. The school wrote into the pilot the need for software and computers and other audio aids for students, which were granted. (Hammond Public Schools, IN)
- In 1990, a team of thirty individuals, representing a broad cross section of staff and community members, developed sixteen beliefs about education, general parameters for which the district will accomplish the mission, and they developed the district mission statement. This strategic planning team merged with the framework for a comprehensive strategic plan. This strategic plan has allowed the district to "create the future" not merely react to it. Many of the eleven strategies in this strategic plan have a direct impact on the inclusion process. (Burnsville-Eagle-Savage Public Schools, Independent School District #191, MN)
- The development of a plan for implementing inclusion is closely tied to Goals 2000. Inclusion was the first program to prompt the schools to such activities as developing vision and mission statements, instituting core teams to make recommendations at the school level, and undertaking large-scale staff development in the new direction. It has been part of the impetus to make changes toward implementing Goals 2000. (Cumberland School Department, RI)

2. The Role of Inclusive Education in Restructuring

As states and school districts engage in broad educational restructuring, inclusion programs are implicated. Often, inclusion is a component of a state's restructuring efforts. This is true in Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Texas. In Kentucky, a state committed to broad educational restructuring, inclusion is an integral component.

Sometimes, as a new school is opened or a School Improvement Plan is developed, inclusion is a part of the design. And, as local districts engage in reform, inclusive education is a part of that change. Reports of school district restructuring efforts appear below:

- We have experienced several unexpected outcomes from our Restructuring efforts. Teachers

who would never have had the opportunity to work together have for the first time crossed educational lines. Bilingual teachers teach with general education teachers. Special education teachers teach with Bilingual and regular education teachers. Inclusion has caused educators to cross cultural, educational, and philosophical boundaries. It has produced a model for ongoing professional development. Educators team teaching are learning new techniques from one another on the job. Experimentation is at an all time high. The need to retool is apparent, and there is a thirst for knowledge not seen in some time. Teachers are reading professional magazines and forming study groups in an effort to better understand the diverse needs of students before them. The inclusion of a multicultural curriculum is another critical aspect of successful inclusive practices. It is an exciting time to be an educator! (Springfield Public Schools, MA)

- In the fall of 1990, as a result of school improvement/restructuring, Gier School started an inclusive education program. Special education support was given in the students' classroom rather than in a pull-out program as was the past practice. Due to the nature of the program, inclusive education has also brought support to nonhandicapped youngsters needing additional assistance. As a result of the school systems restructuring and reform, a belief system was developed in the 1989-90 school year. This encompassed our school district's belief in inclusion. All of the beliefs reflect the idea of inclusion. (Hillsdale Community Schools, MI)
- Inclusive education philosophy is deeply embedded in other reform/restructuring efforts across the district. The district's two newest schools have been architecturally and philosophically designed to accommodate all learners' needs in individual, small group, and large group settings. (Chaska Public Schools, Independent School District #112, MN)
- Inclusion has been directly related to restructuring and reforming the school district. At the same time that inclusion began and students were integrated into the [general education] programs. Gifted and Talented, which had previously been a pull-out program, was changed over to an enrichment program for all students. (Clinton Township School District, NJ)
- Inclusion efforts preceded the district's restructuring activities. Inclusion is now considered to be the accepted approach, i.e. the bridge between the old special education structure and the more appropriate arrangement for special needs students. Currently, every school (six elementary, one middle, and one high school) has embraced the inclusion model. (Coventry Public Schools, RI)
- Inclusion has had a tremendous impact on curriculum restructuring and instruction for all our diverse learners. Structural arrangements provided through cooperative learning models have been advocated to facilitate academic and social learning. Problem solving has been increasingly stressed to assist students. Teachers are encouraged to assist students in learning how to learn through approaches such as the "Strategies Intervention Model". Emphasis has been shifting from a focus on content toward a focus on learning strategies, such as teaching skills, processes, and practices that allow learners of all ages to sustain and update their acquisition and application of specific knowledge. More emphasis is being placed on teaching the child and not just the text. (Alvarado Independent School District, TX)

3. The Extent of Inclusive Education

The data indicate that students with each of IDEA's thirteen categories of disability, at all levels of severity, are effectively involved in inclusion programs. Reports of the extent of inclusive education programs appear below:

- Deaf children are included in an inclusive model, with classes taught by a general education teacher and a deaf education teacher, both of whom sign; teachers who sign are given a "bilingual education" bonus. There is no isolation of the deaf students, in the classroom or playground. Hearing students sign. Indeed, at the eighth grade graduation ceremony, the three hearing students who were chosen as speakers (the fourth was deaf) each signed their speech. (Burbank Unified School District, CA)
- Currently, Canton Middle School operates as a full inclusion school with multiage, heterogeneously group classes of six, seventh and eighth graders. The special needs students

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include 84 who are learning disabled, 37 language impaired, eleven seriously emotionally impaired, six moderately intellectually limited, five multihandicapped, three other health impaired, two with traumatic brain injury, and two with hearing impairments. (Baltimore City Schools, MD)

- Inclusion is now a full blown activity for K through 8th grade. All of the students who are residents of this township attend their age appropriate class, in their neighborhood school and are assigned to regular education classrooms. (Clinton Township School District, NJ)
- As a member of the Coalition of Essential Schools, we are fully inclusive: all students with disabilities are fully included in the mainstream of regular education. (Souhegan High School, Souhegan School District, NH)
- All students with disabilities who live in the school district have the opportunity to be totally included in the regular classroom and the extracurricular activities of their school. The only criteria for a student to attend any of our six elementary schools, our middle school or our high school is they must be breathing. Our school district does not view inclusion as a program. It is part of our total belief and practice. It goes part and parcel with the idea that our responsibility is to all children. If inclusion is only used as a way to deal with special education students, it will never accomplish anything. (Ontario School District, OR)

A number of school districts (such as Weld County, CO; Brevard County, FL; Bartow County, GA; Clinton Township School District, NJ; Johnson City, NY; Ontario School District, OR; Mansfield, TX; and many districts in Vermont) provide inclusion opportunities at all schools in the district, at all grade levels, serving students with all disabilities. Other districts, starting with one or more schools, have committed to districtwide programs over time. Many others have included all the students at particular grade levels, most frequently at the elementary grades, on occasion at the middle school level, rarely at the high school level. Many districts include all students with a particular disability, most frequently those with mild impairments, particularly students labelled as Learning Disabled.

4. Staffing and School Organization

The data indicate that many staffing models are used by school districts to support inclusive education. The most frequently cited model was co-teaching. Models that school districts report are described below:

- A co-teaching or collaborative teaching model, where a general education and a special education teacher share a classroom;
- The special education teacher serves as a "consultant" to one or more general education teachers;
- At middle schools, where teachers at a grade level are teamed, districts add a special education teacher to the team; and
- The "methods and resource teacher model" (first developed in New Brunswick, Canada) involves a special education teacher, whose students have been distributed in general education classes, working with the general education teacher, adapting materials, and giving demonstration lessons.

Some reports from school districts of their staffing and organization models appear below:

- The Full Inclusion programs (for severely impaired students) are run with approximately the same staffing ratio as a Severely Handicapped Special Day Class, about nine to twelve students, one teacher, and two instructional assistants. Fully included students are counted as one of the general education teacher's class caseload, not as an additional student (e.g. one or thirty students, not thirty plus one more student). In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Napa Valley Educators Association and Napa Valley Unified School District has been written. It provides opportunities for the general education teacher to visit classrooms where full inclusion is taking place, to participate in staff development, and to have access to training funds. The general education teacher has the opportunity to review the Individual Education Program (IEP) and, if appropriate, to participate in the development of a new IEP. The general education teacher and special education staff jointly plan for curriculum adaptation, level of support to be provided, safety issues, behavior interventions and curricular modifications. A teacher support group has been established. (Napa Valley Unified School, CA)

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- The inclusion model at the Seven Springs Elementary School serves students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), grades 2-5, in integrated mixed-grade pods. Each pod is taught by a team of four teachers, with a specialized teacher in SLD serving as a fifth member of the team. The SLD teacher works as a resource, assisting both SLD and non-SLD students, as needed. Instructional planning and interventions are collaboratively decided upon by the teacher team. (District School Board of Pasco County, FL)
- The Canton Middle school is a home-based community school (grades 6-8) with the number of special needs students being in proportion to those in the area. The school has been divided into five teams of 150 students with five general educators and two special educators. Each team has five classes with approximately thirty students per class, of which six students in each class have special needs. (Baltimore City Schools, MD)
- Special education students with severe disabilities have long been housed at P.S.329, a general education school in southern Brooklyn. Based on the initiative of the special education administrators, an inclusion program has been developed for students with severe disabilities. The special education students, who had been in a class with one teacher and three paraprofessionals, are distributed across three general education classes (two students per class), along with an aide assigned full time to each class. The aide is not limited to working with the special education students. The special education classroom teacher serves now as a "methods and resources teacher", assisting the general education teacher through model lessons and direct classroom support, and encourages parental involvement. An inclusion facilitator assists the overall effort. Key to the success of the program is the active engagement of the building's general education principal. (New York City Public Schools, NY)
- At the Reidsville Intermediate School, the speech teacher also utilizes the inclusion concept to serve her students. Although she occasionally provides individual therapy, she has found language therapy in the regular classroom to be the most successful for her students. (Rockingham County Consolidated Schools, NC)
- Special education self-contained resource classes were eliminated in the fall of 1994 and personnel reassigned. Four inclusion specialist positions were developed to help coordinate and support the needs of students in the inclusive classroom. They also instruct and co-teach. Each grade level, preK through 6, has an instructional assistant. The Chapter 1 and Speech Therapist also teach in the general classroom. A.N.E.W.S. Room (Nurturing Education with Support) has been created as an area where all students can go for extra assistance. (Elkhart Independent School District, TX)

The data indicate that while special education personnel are not eliminated within a school district, individuals may assume new responsibilities.

5. Staff Attitudes

The data indicate that teacher attitudes about inclusive education range widely - from being the initiators of inclusion programs to opposition. Most districts report that over time attitudes have changed in a positive direction. Reports from school districts of staff attitudes appear below:

- The general education staff has moved beyond their initial concerns about whether they could adequately meet the needs of the special education youngsters. They now see them as simply one more student with a unique set of needs. The full inclusion benefits the regular classroom teacher in that the provision of services can often include a few other students that need the services, but do not qualify for Special Education. (Colusa Unified School District, CA)
- In terms of our special education teachers, we initially had staff that ranged from spearheading the inclusion movement to staff passively agreeing ... Our Leemore High School teachers have undergone an interesting "evolution" One of the most important skills they had to learn was how to work with general education teachers and in general education classes. All the veteran special education teachers have come to recognize that inclusive education does work. ... (Leemore Union High School District, CA)
- The attitudes of staff members, both general and special educators, have changed dramatically. Most significantly, Special Education is no longer seen as something clearly separate and distinct from the larger mission of the

school. The lines between general and special education are not as clear as they used to be and staff is now comfortable and accepting of this "parameter fusion". (Baltimore City Schools, MD)

- As a 19-year veteran special education teacher the transformation from self-contained units to delivering services in a regular education environment required letting go. We were used to running our own little empires. Learning to share space with other teachers was a big adjustment; however, I enjoy teaching much more than I did when working with the traditional special education model. In the past, we instilled almost a learned helplessness in students with disabilities. We did a real disservice to students in special education when we did things for them; now they're learning to be responsible for their own learning. (Connotton Valley Union School District, OH)
- Staff attitudes seem to be constantly improving. During the second year of implementation, there seems to be a significant difference in staff attitude. Basic education teachers seem to be more comfortable with other professionals in their classroom, and special education teachers seem to be adjusting to their new roles. (Hazelton Area School District, PA)
- The most identifiable change in the staff since we started inclusion is the commitment to all children in the classroom. There is no longer a "yours and mine" attitude. Responsibilities for children are shared rather than separated. Inclusion has built a tremendous sense of ownership and pride in the community of our school. The school environment is professional with more of a sense of respect for one another. Inclusion has bolstered an entirely different working relationship among staff members. This is the best surprise of all as the learning takes place casually and comfortably among us as we have become professional and personal friends. (Brillon Public Schools, WI)

6. Instructional Strategies and Classroom Supports

The data indicate that instructional strategies and classroom practices that support inclusive education for the most part are the same ones that teachers believe are effective for students in general. They report that a precursor to inclusive programs is a belief in the benefits of heterogeneous classrooms. Of the districts reporting, cooperative learning is identified as the most important instructional strategy supporting inclusive education. Indeed, well over half of the districts report using cooperative learning. Instructional strategies cited by a quarter or more of the districts, include: cooperative learning; curricular modifications; "hands-on" teaching (esp. in science and mathematics); whole language instruction; use of peers as tutors and "buddies"; thematic and multidisciplinary curriculum; the use of para professional/classroom aides; and the use of instructional technology.

Reports from school districts of instructional strategies and classroom supports appear below:

- Since we began inclusion in the fall of the 1990-91 school year, attitudes and processes have undergone many changes. Inclusion was not the only new initiative in our district at this time. Changes were underway in the Language Arts Process, and the adoption of a new Student Management Program centered around Glasser's Control Theory/Reality Therapy. Teacher frustration was running high as they tried to internalize and implement all these programs at once. As each system was adopted by individual staff members for the "regular education" students, it became obvious to most that with very little modification these practices were good for the included students also. Perhaps the biggest problem was that staff tried to make inclusion too hard by planning separate and distinct programs for their individual population instead of modifying their already existing programs to suit individual needs. The Writing Process, which is an integral part of our curriculum K-12, is an excellent program for included students also that makes them feel just like any other student as they are able, with help, to participate in all phases of the process from First Draft to Publication. As teachers became more familiar with each of these new concepts, attitudes also changed about their application for the included students. (Hillsdale Community Schools, MI)
- Whole Language in the elementary schools

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makes it possible for all students to participate in writing and reading experiences. The literature-based reading program provides a variety of options for reading (in groups, with a partner, listening to tapes). The activities that accompany the stories allow all students to be actively involved in some way. Math manipulatives and a focus on problem-solving activities make it possible to include all children in math lessons. Current Events and the use of television and multimedia has become a part of the Social Studies curriculum, which has allowed all students, even nonreaders, to participate. Instructional supports such as Chapter 1 and Assurance of Mastery are provided in classrooms rather than pull-out settings. The district has seen significant changes in classroom instructional settings. (Burnsville Eagle-Savage Public Schools, Independent School District #191, MN)

- Many of the instructional strategies teachers use with "normal" children work well with children with disabilities. These can include modifying the curriculum, behavior interventions, assignment sheets, text books on tape or highlighted, more time allotment, shorter assignments, substitute written assignments, computer work vs. written work, special seating, study carrels, and many more. Supports include program or management assistants to help small groups or one-to-one, resource room time, behavior specialists. This district also has an Inclusion Support Group available in the elementary building to answer questions and to help with ideas. This Group sponsors support groups during the school year which give parents, teachers, and other interested persons a chance to voice concerns and get answers. (Inver Grove Heights Public Schools, MN)
- The Class Within A Class service delivery model has encouraged the placement of students with mild to moderate disabilities in the general education classroom. It is built upon the premise that special education students are capable of mastering the same challenging curriculum as their peers without disabilities when the resources of general education and special education are merged in a collaborative teaching model; supported by the strong alignment of curriculum, teaching, and assessment; and augmented with instruction in learning strategies for those children who do not possess efficient learning processes. (Frances Howell School District, MO)
- Learning to use the computer as a learning tool within the instructional program has proven very successful. Frequently teachers employ cooperative learning activities within the classroom. In addition, teachers allow students to select the types of projects that will demonstrate their knowledge - some present information in written reports, others through visuals, or oral reports. The learning styles of students are reflected in the presentations by the teachers. Teachers use manipulatives within all subjects and the calculator to assist in math. (Roswell Independent School District, NM)
- Teachers are learning how to change a lesson so that all learners can benefit. The teachers who are teaching an inclusive classroom full of students are becoming more effective teachers. They are utilizing the multimodality approach to accommodate the various learning styles. Teachers have been noted to have become more student centered ... Now that the special education teacher or instructional assistant is involved in the activities, functions, and successes within the regular classroom, students have a better change at immediate access to an adult for extra support and help. The teachers help everyone. There are no boundaries in the classroom in so far as who can work with whom. (Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, TN)
- "Jump Start" is a morning program, offered to all students, which involves previewing, pre-teaching, reviewing, re-teaching of classroom curricula. This enables students to get a "jump start" on the day to assure continuous academic success in the general education classroom. (Takhoma School District, WA)
- Cooperative learning is one strategy that supports inclusion. Another is peer tutoring. Where they are being used, inclusion is successful. The portfolio process also provides students with opportunities to demonstrate knowledge in unique ways, as does the emphasis on Gardner's multiple intelligences. For the first time, teachers in the district are allowing demonstration of skills in ways other than pen and pencil performance. This act in itself allows teachers to recognize unique intelligences and

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to catch students doing well who previously might not have been able to demonstrate success because of the limitations set. (Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union, VT)

7. Parental Response

The data indicate the same level of parental involvement in their school district when inclusive education programs are implemented. Parents of special education students generally are very supportive of inclusive education programs, and parents of general education students have, for the most part, accepted them as part of school restructuring efforts and the value system of the district. Some general education parents report the positive social and academic benefits for their children due to involvement with persons with disabilities and the increase in instructional supports in the classroom. Reports from school districts of parental involvement and response appear below:

- There have been no complaints from parents of students who have no disabilities. Because of the support given to the teacher (i.e. a paraprofessional or a co-teacher) some parents see an additional benefit to having a special education student in the classroom. (Ridgefield Public Schools, CT)
- Parents of handicapped students have welcomed the opportunity to see their children educated with their age mates in nonexclusive settings. Parents of nonhandicapped were cautious until they saw achievement results that were not depressed and a social milieu that was friendly and relaxed. (The Hillsdale Community Schools, MI)
- There has been a positive response from parents that services will be brought to students within the regular classroom. Many do not want their student missing what is happening in the regular classroom, but they also want help for their student. With a recent change in the format of delivery of services for Hearing Impaired, many of the parents were very hesitant about their student being in a regular classroom, even when an interpreter would be provided. Now four months later, the parents are very pleased with the social interaction and lea ning that is happening by being with their peers. (Roswell Independent School District, NM)
- Parental involvement has provided our most vehement feedback. Initially the parents of special education students seemed concerned about two issues: 1. Would their child's specific needs for unique services really be met in the regular classroom? and 2. Would their child be only physically included in the class but be ignored, neglected, or resented? Often these same worried parents have become inclusion's most zealous supporters as they see their child really making friends and modeling peers in the classroom. However, this change is an ongoing process requiring lots of meetings and collaborative problem solving. Likewise, parents of general education students tell us they approve of the compassion and tolerance they see in their children developing as a result of inclusion. Many of the same parents had worried initially that children with special needs would take av.ay from the amount of teacher time their child would receive. (Bend LaPine Public Schools, OR)

8. Student Outcomes and Program Evaluation

The data from school districts indicate that there are academic, behavioral, and social benefits for students. The results reported by the school districts are based on standardized tests, IEP completion, teacher, parent, and student reports.[3] Increasingly, districts are undertaking comprehensive evaluations of their inclusive education programs, often in collaboration with statewide research efforts or university researchers (e.g. University of Massachusetts, Ohio State University, Portland State University, University of Vermont).

Reports from school districts of student outcomes appear below:

- Multiple examples of positive changes in student behavior are evident across the grade levels. Academic changes have been verified by standardized test scores, authentic assessment, and plain old observation. Social changes are evident as well, importantly within the general education population, as well as the inclusion students and their families. Simply put, regular education students have become humanized, and special education students have the opportunity to become known as indi-

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viduals with their own personalities (Fort Bragg Unified School District CA. Inclusive education takes place at two elementary schools, the middle school, and the high school).

- Significant changes, both socially and educationally, have been observed and documented for the fully included students. Changes ranging from increased independence and self-esteem to elevated reading levels have been noted. Many of these outcomes are evaluated through teacher/parent/ student observations and interviews as well as standardized testing and authentic assessment. Changes in the attitudes and self-esteem have been noted in the students without noticeable disabilities. The Full Inclusion Program was a major reason Carneros Elementary School was named a California Distinguished School in 1993. (Napa Valley Unified School District CA. Elementary and middle schools are implementing inclusive education programs).
- SLD students were found to develop and grow positively in both academic and affective areas, although not at the same pace as students without disabilities. Although growth on some indicators was not statistically significant, there were no observable drops in the academic performance of the SLD students. Interestingly, in showing continued and statistically significant academic growth in several areas, non-SLD students appeared not to be adversely affected by the presence of SLD students as classroom peers - a fear often expressed by parents of students without disabilities. The findings on the affective student outcomes were well supported by the results of the comprehensive student, parent and teacher surveys, which suggested improved self-esteem of SLD students, and in some cases, improved motivation as well. (Seven Springs Elementary School, District School Board of Pasco County FL. Students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) are fully included).
- Student outcomes for students with disabilities have been outstanding. All students are exceeding IEP objectives over progress in self-contained classes; parents report increased generalization of learning at home; school staff consistently report positive changes in students once they are "included"; students with disabilities resist going back to their self-contained classmates and participating with them in "handicapped only" activities. We have noted that students learn well when taught by regular education staff, special education staff, and peers. (Gwinnett County Public Schools GA. Inclusion programs operate at four elementary schools and a middle school).
- Changes in students have been twofold. For non-handicapped students, they have come to be more aware of both the strengths and weaknesses of their handicapped peers in ways that are less prejudicial and hateful. For handicapped youngsters, the main change is connected to their increased level of expectations as to both academics and behavior. We evaluated these outcomes through a climate audit study conducted by an independent group from Indiana University. (Lawrenceburg Community Schools IN. All students are served in inclusive settings in the elementary school).
- The number of identified special education students has dropped 22 percent in the four years, and elementary discipline referrals have decreased by 50 percent. In each year of the program, the district's standardized reading and mathematics scores have improved. (West Feliciana Parish Schools LA. They are in the sixth year of an integrated program for all elementary students).
- The students have also shown signs of acceptance and elation. School is a place where you are accepted for who you are. You don't need to be fixed or changed before you can be integrated. This philosophy has caused students to work hard and take a risk. Students who would not have associated in the past are finding that they share more likeness than difference. Students are working collaboratively and liking it. Students are sharing ideas, time, and their classrooms and for the first time accepting each other as unique individuals complete with faults, but most importantly with strengths. (Springfield Public Schools MA. As part of a state restructuring grant, the district is restructuring for full inclusion).
- Students have been our biggest surprise. Conventional wisdom held that children were cruel to one another and the handicapped would face ridicule and scorn. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our experience has been that the children have been kind, sup-

portive and protective of their handicapped classmates. Often the adults who have been involved have learned kindness and tolerance from observing the children in their care. Of all the surprises we have found with this project, none has been as dramatic as this one. (Hillsdale Community Schools MI. Almost all of the district's students, K-8, are in age-appropriate regular education classrooms with support from Chapter 1, local Gifted and Talented, and Special Education staff).

9. Fiscal Issues

The data indicate that the current state-funding formulas support segregation and inhibit inclusion. These reports are confirmed by the work of the federally funded Center for Special Education Finance. Several states report efforts to change the present formulas in order to support inclusive education initiatives. For example, Florida is piloting a new funding system in twenty schools, using matrices to rate students by need, rather than by label. In Iowa, the state has initiated a "hold harmless" provision, freezing funding at existing levels. A report evaluating Vermont's Act 230 concludes with a caution concerning the need for stable and adequate funding:

- If funding does not exist to provide services to students taken off IEPs or never identified for special education, then the only choice left to parents and educators to ensure services will be available is to identify students as eligible for special education.

The data indicate that when inclusion programs are implemented on a limited basis, the real cost consequences are skewed. For example, if a single child is included and an aide hired to work in the general education class, costs increase. The pattern reported most frequently by school districts is that the same fiscal resources are being used in a different manner. School district reports on the finances of inclusive education programs appear below:

- For the most part, school staff are using the same special education resources in a different manner. (Kingman, AZ)
- Funds have been reallocated from transportation and outgoing tuition to increase staff. Although there has been a significant staff increase, overall funds have been saved. (Milford Board of Education, CT)
- The inclusion program has cost the district the expense of nine inclusion aides. There are small savings. Our special education buses no longer bring students from throughout the county into one central location, thus cutting down on transportation costs. More students are travelling on typical buses to their local schools. There are four elementary classrooms available for other uses. (Pulaski County Schools, KY)

Five years ago this district was spending $270,000 in out-of-district tuition costs; we are now spending in the ballpark of $60,000 for our two part-time students to maintain their out-of-district placements. The result has been that we have been able to provide additional staff to support our programs and support our students in school. (Clinton Township School District, NJ)

- Inclusion requires a new focus on training which costs more up front but pays off in the end. We are able to stretch dollars further by bringing special education staff into the regular classrooms. (Bend LaPine Public Schools, OR)
- Before inclusion we were busing students all over the county in order for them to receive services at different sites. When we allowed all students to attend their neighborhood schools, the money no longer was needed in transportation and was moved to support services in the regular classroom. Because of this transfer of money the increase for supporting students with disabilities in the regular classroom was almost nothing. (Ontario School District, OR)
- There have been no real fiscal changes on the school level. We have implemented inclusive programming in many sites without increased cost to the district. In a recent cost comparison of MOSAIC (Model Opportunities to Attend Inclusive Classrooms in Pittsburgh) and our segregated special education preschool, figures indicate no increased cost per pupil. (Pittsburgh Public Schools, PA)

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NEXT STEPS

Twenty years after the passage of P.L. 94-142, inclusive education is at a "takeoff" point. A decade ago, a scholar of school effectiveness, the late Ron Edmonds, said that we know how to develop effective schools, but we have yet to develop effective districts. NCERI's 1995 study indicates that this is true of inclusive education at the present time. For inclusive education to become part of the fabric of American education, the following changes are necessary:

- The Congress must in the renewal of IDEA reaffirm the right of all students with disabilities to a free appropriate public education, the due process rights of students and their parents, and the student's right to a bias-free evaluation.
- Inclusive education must become fully infused in the work of educational reform. This includes all federally supported reform efforts (e.g. Goals 2000, the curricular development and standards setting programs), the state reform efforts, and the large-scale independent reform efforts.
- Restructured schools must be ones where diversity in student population and learning modalities are valued and outcomes for all students are given the highest priority.
- Careful attention must be given to assure that recognition of the capacity and strengths of students with disabilities are not lost in "sympathy" and "understanding".
- Major changes must be undertaken in teacher education programs, as well as the certification and licensure of teachers, to prepare all school personnel to work in inclusive settings.
- Federal and state funding practices must be reformed so as to support inclusive education.
- The voice and experience of teachers must be utilized as a source of benefit to all students.
- The voice and experience of persons with disabilities must be brought into the schools, as a source of expertise of benefit to all students.
- Parental involvement in the schools must transcend the limitations of a due process focus and become a true partnership among equals.

DATA COLLECTION

The chief state school officer in each state was contacted requesting state-level information on inclusion, including policies and programs, and the identification of local districts that conducted inclusive education programs. The superintendent of each of these school districts was contacted for specific information. School districts that were reported upon in NCERI's 1994 study were also contacted. Also, the Regional Resource Centers, funded by the Department of Education, identified inclusion projects that were noteworthy.

The material used in describing each district is drawn from these responses, using whenever possible the words of the respondents. In addition to these self-reports, other printed material from the state or district; teacher, parent, and student reports; and material from the 1994 national study has been used.

NOTES

1 A copy of the full 470-page report is available at $15 plus postage, prepaid, from NCERI.

2 Notable court decisions include: *Daniel R.R. v. State Board of Education* (5th Cir. 1989); *Greer v. Rome City School District* (11th Cir. 1991); *Oberti v. Board of Education Borough of Clementon* (3rd Cir. 1993); *Sacramento City Unified School District v. Rachel Holland* (9th Cir. 1994); a 1993 agreement between plaintiffs and the Boston Public Schools for the full inclusion of all special needs students over a three-year period; and a 1994 court order in Oklahoma closing the Hisson Institute (*Homeward Bound v. Hisson Memorial Center*), where school-age residents of this facility for persons with severe disabilities are to be served in neighborhood schools in thirty local school districts. (A detailed discussion of the four circuit court decisions is presented in D. Lipton, "The 'Full Inclusion' Court Cases: 1989-1994", NCERI *Bulletin*, 1 (2).

3 For a review of the research on the effects of inclusion programs, see NCERI *Bulletin*, 2 (2).

National Center on Education Restructuring and Inclusion (NCERI)

The National Center on Education Restructuring and Inclusion has been established to promote and support educational programs where all students are served effectively in inclusive settings. Towards this goal, the National Center:

- Addresses issues of national and local policy
- Disseminates information about programs, practices, evaluation, and funding
- Provides training and technical assistance
- Builds a network of inclusion districts
- Identifies individuals with expertise in inclusion
- Conducts research
- Infuses inclusion into educational restructuring.

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